

Why I Am An Atheist

WHY I AM AN ATHEIST.

The reason I am an Atheist is because I could not be anything else. May parents and teachers tried to make me a goodie-goodie boy and failed in part. Then I tried honestly and truly to be good. Went down on my marrow bones and asked God to show me the way as his book had promised. I got the same answer that those get who bow to wood and stone, minus the presence of the wood and stone. I saw that I was a bigger fool than the heathen because he could see his God even if he would not move or speak. This started me again to reason and that made me an everlasting Atheist. There's no room for a god in this busy world, no use for him since the days of Moses. It seems to me that if I were an honest consistent Christian and would know of all the loss of life on the ocean and in mines and by volcanoes, and all the suffering consequent thereto, it would make a solid Atheist of me the first jump in the road.

J. H. CONSTABLE.
Ludell, Kans.

WHY I AM AN ATHEIST.

I cannot swallow the trinity; I have never up to this writing seen, heard, tasted, felt, or smelled any god, ghost, or spirit. I have no creed, likewise no god.

My aim is morality and humanity.
H. C. COPPOCK.
Indianapolis, Ind.

WHY I AM AN ATHEIST.

Why I am an Atheist is because, "I was born that way, and have held my own ever since," as the man said who was accused of possessing no worldly goods. From my earliest recollection I was compelled to attend Presbyterian Sunday school every Sunday morning and Methodist in the afternoons, when it was so thoroughly impressed on my mind that "God" was the incarnation of goodness, and if I would always do what I didn't want to do, he would devote a great deal of his omnipotence to me and my desires. But let me go fishing on Sunday and his omnipotent string broke and his great rival and superior, the devil—one of his own creations that was greater than himself—picked it up where god let go and proceeded to make special preparations for my warm reception in the sweet bye and bye.

Yet, I could be "saved" by repentance and tears and sacrificial contributions, but on the next infraction it was all repeated and so on until god in his infinite goodness and mercy called the game off and the winning depended on the last trump, which was universally admitted that ninety-nine out of every hundred was held by the devil. It wrung god's heart to see it so, and he sweated great drops of blood over it, but was powerless to prevent it, for he himself had ordained it thus, before the foundations of the world, when he was nothing and lived nowhere, and a matter of such importance must stand.

Of course, he could number the hairs of a man's head and count the useless sparrows, and could reverse the order of the solar system and hold the sun and moon in check, while murder and carnage went merrily on, and the very diadem of all morality, the purity of womanhood, was treated with contempt and flendishly outraged at his express command.

While the above phase of infinite character was unfolding before my youthful thinker, I was sincerely seeking for information that would throw light on the inconsistencies, but I was ignored or punished or given such absurd interpretations that my skepticism was confirmed, and I slowly but surely concluded that the whole business was nothing but an exaggerated Santa Clause, the one for children and the other for adults, and both equally false.

In later years as science unfolds the grand truths of nature and the good, beautiful and sublime are ours to the fullest extent of our comprehension, the idea of a "god" pales to a ridiculous insignificance, and a man must stultify his reason to believe in one.

WALTER COLLINS.
Los Angeles, Calif.

WHY I AM AN ATHEIST.

I am an Atheist because sixty years of experience and investigation have developed no reason for being a Theist. Whoever can point me to the slightest indication of the existence of a "Supreme Being" has it in his power to make an Agnostic of me. "On the side" I will remark that I believe in the beneficence of truth. In truth only is there safety, sanity, peace and justice. And therefore do I war unceasingly on humbug and hallucination, for these have been at the bottom, the root of nearly all the cruelties and diabolism of humanity.

C. W. CLARK.
Allerton, Iowa.

WHY I AM AN ATHEIST.

Most of the thinking men and women are becoming Atheists. They do not believe in a personal God, or any God outside of matter that governs it.

They believe that matter is automatic, self-acting, needs no God or any other power.

Giordano Bruno believed in the unity of matter, but could not tell what it was; the Catholics burnt his for his belief.

Aristotle said man cannot reason correctly without reasoning from some known fact. We do know there is electricity, the atoms of which fill the infinity of space.

Bruno did not see it as we do.

These atoms cannot be seen in its wonderful power until it is manifested through its power in nature. Now by concentration of the atoms of electricity into a vacuum, the sun was formed and took its motion in the universe by the polarity force of matter. Electricity has commenced the universe.

The next thing it did, was to form the planet Mercury, which was done by concentration of the atoms of electricity into a vacuum, and by the polarity force of matter, it took its daily motion, and by the magnetic force of the sun it was carried round the sun, which gave it its yearly motion. All the other planets, viz., Venus, earth, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus and Neptune were formed in the same way, and received their daily and yearly motions; the chick in the egg and babe in its mother's womb have been formed and brought to life by the same power.

Electricity has completed the universe as far as astronomy has revealed it to us.

By evolution, all nature has become manifested to our five senses.

We have the whole vegetable kingdom of this earth placed before us, and by the idea of Aristotle, the animal kingdom is an evolution of the vegetable, and the human being is an evolution of the animal kingdom by the Darwinian system.

Here we are on this earth by this great electrical power without any God to have created us.

What was the religion of those Atheists when there was not any church or house on the land, and nobody to teach them superstition. It is natural that they would worship the sun, because every thing in nature was revived by its light and heat. This would suggest something good or heaven, and darkness, with the wild beasts ready to devour them when they had not any place to hide in but a cave or hollow tree for shelter. This would suggest the idea of fear or hell.

Heaven and hell were started in this way.

Those who call themselves Christians must see that science has destroyed their God and devil.

Christians should close the doors of their churches and stop preaching what they know is not true, and save their money to buy Paine's "Age of Reason," and other scientific books.

AARON DAVIS.
Frederick, Md.

WHY I AM AN AGNOSTIC.

I have just read many letters in the Blade giving different reasons why they are Agnostics, and I have enjoyed them very much, and now I will proceed to state why I am an Agnostic. First, because I am not an ignoramus, a non compos mentis, or a fool. I have read a great deal pro and con on that subject and can find nothing to lead me to believe in the man made God of the universe, and if there are any gods outside the universe I do not know anything about them, and am going to be honest with myself and not pretend to be an ignoramus or a "fool for Christ's sake."

N. T. HARRIS, D. D. S.
Tuscaloosa, Ala.

WHY I AM AN ATHEIST.

Definitions are always in order. "Atheist: One who disbelieves, or denies the existence of a supreme intelligent being"—Webster. A God, to be a God, must be a creator of infinite power. These are claimed as God's attributes, and failing to accept or worship such a character lays one liable to the charge of "Atheism."

Let us examine the claims: "Create: 'Create; to bring into being, to form out of nothing.'—Webster.

This definition is absolutely without meaning, as creation is unthinkable, consequently absurd and untrue. No chemist has ever been able to destroy a single atom of matter. And if matter is indestructible it must be eternal forward, and if eternal forward it must be eternal backward; hence no "Creator."

"Wisdom and goodness imply personality; but personality implies organization and limitation. And if limited, God could not be infinite. If he is unlimited he must occupy all space; and if so, there is no room for the universe. But the universe is here and refuses to be set aside. And as no two bodies can occupy the same space at the same time, God does not exist. A God of infinite goodness would desire to prevent evil. Infinite wisdom would know how to do this and infinite power would confer the ability. But evil exists; therefore God does not."

A God must be either something or nothing. If he is something, then he is material; and if material he must be subject to the laws of matter. And as ratiocination is an attribute of matter in an organized form, he would be subject to disintegration, dissolution and death. To say that "God is a spirit" is to admit that he is nothing.

To assume that the universe was "caused and that God was the cause does no account for the mystery of existence, but adds a new mystery to the existing one.

A "first cause" is as unthinkable as a last effect, and necessitates a positing of a prior cause to account for the so-called "First Cause."

Gods always partake of the nature of the people who worship them, showing that their existence is a "subjective" and not an "objective" one. The telescope, microscope, microscope, scales and crucible—the tools with which we acquire knowledge—furnish no trace of God or gods. The imagination is the source from which

emerge all the gods and goddesses used or cursed mankind.

God is a theological myth, a logical absurdity, a scientific impossibility and a moral monstrosity. He is an attempt to explain the inexplicable and account for the unaccountable. He is the worst attribute of his maker—the priest—magnified projected into space and personified a bugaboo, a Mumbo Jumbo to frighten the ignorant, superstitious; a heavenly Svengali to hypnotize the priests dupes while he rifles their pockets.

I do not believe in God because I have sense enough to know that all Gods are frauds; and I have some solicitude for my reputation for sanity. I refuse to worship him because I have a pardonable desire to retain my self-respect.

That is "Why I am an Atheist."
HARRY HOOVER.
Carnegie, Pa.

WHY I AM AN ATHEIST.

Because the sentiment of justice is a part of my nature; because I was born with common sense. The god idea is, to my mind, as absurd as the story of his reputed son, sired by a ghost, dam a virgin.

A. JOHNSON.
San Francisco, Calif.

WHY I AM AN INFIDEL.

Because I deem it not right to lie, and I am too honest to say I believe that which my reason teaches me is untrue. I am an Agnostic, because like Ingersoll I don't know; I am a Freethinker because I think it every man's duty to do his own thinking and come to his own conclusions with stability and bravery enough to abide by the consequences of his own actions.

E. G. NICHOLS.
Dodge, Ky.

WHY I AM AN ATHEIST.

Because it has dawned upon me that it is right to be so, and upon investigation I find no real evidence of the divine origin of the scriptures. And because I cannot, as a refined and respectable woman, take up my bosom as a daily guide, a book of such low morals and degrading influences. Written by a lot of priests, I cannot accept a salvation that is based wholly upon the dreams of an ancient and superstitious people, with no proof save blind faith.

Everything that so many people think transpires from the supernatural, and many things that would really perplex the average mind, have a natural and material foundation in the workings of the human mind; that is, things that are not connected with our solar system.

It is ignorance of the scientific working of their own natures and mind that keep so much "mystery" in the air; and as long as there is a mystery about, the people will ascribe it to the supernatural.

I am an Atheist because I know the Bible will not do to depend upon. I have tried it and found it wanting.

In fact, I found in the scriptures the origin of woman, slavery, and that it was one of God's main points to oppress women, and keep them in the realms of ignorance.

I am in the ranks of Liberalism because of its elevating principles, its broad road to freedom of thought, speech and investigation.

MINNIE PARRISH.
Leonard, Texas.

WHY I AM AN ATHEIST.

The term Atheist is viewed by most people, in that part of the civilized world known as Christendom as being the most hideous of ideas, and the person entertaining such an idea is shunned as though they were criminals or moral lepers. So this being the case, most people that hold such an idea and dare express it, are persons above the average in intelligence.

Every person's god is only his conception of nature. We are like primitive man; every one that thinks or observes nature to any extent naturally wonders how and when came the Cosmos and all phenomena of which they can conceive.

Here without scientific knowledge theology supplies the demands of the imagination until he can be better informed. To my mind astronomy and geology have done more to wrest the minds of man from the clutches of theology and superstition than anything else.

I am an Atheist because there is no God. The term "atheist" means a disbeliever in God. I take it that there are two kinds of Atheism, nominal atheism and positive atheism. Nominal atheism is merely a disbeliever in God. The other, positive atheism, is the assertion that there is not and cannot be such a being as theology's God. I belong to the latter class.

I believe that all rational people at some time in life doubt the existence of God, especially a personal God; but not understanding nature cannot mature good atheistic thoughts. The materialist conception of all things is the true scientific conception.

There cannot be such a phenomenon as a God, a supreme being, or anything of the kind, for science has proven that matter in the aggregate or atomic condition has no beginning, cannot be destroyed or annihilated, so it must have always existed at all times and every where. So we come to these three infinite conditions: Infinite space, infinite matter (matter or force not separate) and infinite duration, and out of these three infinite conditions have evolved all phenomena.

Matter is divided into seventy-one elements; these elements affinitize, or repulse each other as the case may be, and this process of the action of elements acting on each other, as they cannot act, according to their relation to every other element about them, is what we call nature, or cause and effect, the same is an endless causation, has no beginning; the effect of one cause becomes the cause of another effect, so on and on. We find that life and death are but a condition of matter.

The Cosmos is purely physical and

mechanical; there is not a phenomena that has not a physical law for its base. We could say a great deal here about "design," but do not care to take up so much space. The design theory is the only plausible one that is put forth to prove the existence of a god. It will not do; we can see more disorder in nature than order, that is from the biological standpoint, while nature in her process of cause and effect is orderly, but as to the welfare of the different forms of life it is very disorderly.

Man eats the chicken, the chicken eats the snake, the snake eats the frog, the frog eats the fly and the fly eats other insects; all this strife of life or loss of life, to sustain life. A man at forty knows no more about theology's God than he did at ten. God does not appear now or at any other time, because there is no God to appear. To be a god there would have to be a form of matter, and like all other forms appear and disappear, which is the order of all organized forms of life. Consequently God would not and could not be "all and in all," as they are wont to tell us.

R. W. RAY.
Atlanta, Ga.

WHY I AM AN AGNOSTIC.

I am an Agnostic because I simply and honestly do not know that there is a God, that I have a soul, or what comes after death.

ELIZABETH HENRY SPARKS.
Carlisle, Ky.

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MAN AND HIS DESTINY.

The Views of a Materialist Philosopher and a Pessimist.

To the Editor of the Sun:

Sir:—Over a half a century ago brave Harriet Martineau said: "From the moment when a man desires to find the truth on one side rather than on the other, it is all over with him as a philosopher." This implies that in searching for truth we must ignore preconceived notions, likes and dislikes, emotional sentiments, etc., and base our belief strictly upon evidence and facts.

The innumerable arguments which are continually advanced by the clergy and your correspondents, based upon the (alleged) universal human longings and desires for continuous life, weigh not a fraction of a hair in settling the question of our post-mortem fate. If they did—if our preferences could be a factor in the matter—all that would be necessary for human beings to live a hundred years or forever, "in the flesh," here on this earth, would be to intensely desire such prolonged sublimity existence, and then, behold! their wishes and caprices would be forthwith realized! If not a factor, now and here, to prolong indefinitely our present life, how can such vague egoistical notions possibly procure for us immortality when the human body—as such living organic form—exists no more?

Nature (or God) is sadly inconsiderate of our welfare and notions. We are all ushered into existence with a death warrant in the hands of Fate, and doomed to go, through our brief life like convicts sentenced to an early death. We long in vain for continued health, happiness and prosperity, but, instead, are mostly afflicted with disease, pain and sorrow. How many actresses, famous singers, public men and society women intensely yearn for prolonged youth, beauty and the continuation of their prime in life, only to behold their charms and talents speedily fade and vanish?

Millions struggle bravely for many years in commercial and professional pursuits, build elegant homes, grand business houses, occupy enviable positions of honor, only to be compelled, after a very brief period, to leave all in possession of strangers.

Are we not in love with this life? Is it not really a prolongation of earth-life we all most desire? Who would not cheerfully resign life claims to a mystic, inscrutable eternal life—minus the physical body—for a paltry hundred years of physical health and vigor added to the life we know, the life we possess and enjoy because in possession of a tangible body of flesh and blood?

But what does Nature or God care for us? Must not this wondrous physique, which constitutes our ego (and without which we can not even think of ourselves as men and women) soon go back to dust, disintegrate into gases, fluids, soil, vegetation and the lower order of animal life? Is it not then, a scientific fact that when the form which originated life constituted individual man during life exists no more the man is dead?

There is no mystery about death whatever; it is precisely what it appears to be, what we all know it to be from observation and experience. The sole mystery connected with it is simply the mystery with which it has been invested by designing or ignorant men. If we confine our belief concerning it to what we know and see we have the entire truth.

At the time life ceases the total dynamic activities of the human structure simply stop, that is all; no grain of anything to make the "surviving soul or spirit" of—not even the "breath" escapes as supposed.

In view of all of this, it is reasonable to believe that the power that controls our existence—whatever this may be—and so utterly and cruelly ignores our wishes now, during the only life we know, should so radically change its mode of procedure as to grant us a mysterious eternal existence, in the absence of the complex organic structure which we know to be an absolute necessity for our existence here? And this transcendent existence is utterly incomprehensible to us, unknown to science, and in localities nondescriptable with the strongest telescopes or photo plates.

If we can live during eternity without this wonderful, complicated physical-vital-dynamic organism—"the crowning work of God" as it has been called—why in the name of reason, I ask, has this body been bestowed upon us for a few paltry years only?

Neither is the "universality" of the belief in immortality an argument in its favor. Many of the wisest men of

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all nations have rejected it. The Egyptians, Grecians, Hindoos, the American Indians, Catholics, Protestant, Spiritualists and Theosophists, all entertain radically antithetical views of a future life. All Christians of the "New Theology," from Jefferson, Franklin, Channing, Emerson, Parker, to Savage, Swing and Thomas, peremptorily reject the views of the old school theologians, pagans and heathens alike, as grossest superstition. If, then, these several beliefs contradict and are destructive of each other, how can they conjointly prove that any one is based upon truth?

Like causes produce like effects. All nations and races in the past having been alike ignorant, alike conceited in their own self-importance, alike controlled by their emotions, alike clinging to life and fearing death—all alike, consequently originated similar beliefs. It proves universal ignorance, not eternal life. Many, wise in other directions, inherited these irrational beliefs and accepted and promulgated them without personal investigation.

Man actually is a transient form of matter—a purely physical product of purely physical causes. All forms of matter are mutable—all begin, all end—the separate elements composing all forms alone persist. Hence man is not immortal.

O, threats of Hell and hope of Paradise! One thing at least is certain—this life flies.

One thing is certain and the rest is lies. The flower that once has 'blown forever dies.'

Where there is thought there must be a thinker—some organic structure which thinks, the physical generates psychical activity—they are cause and effect. Remove the cause and the effect vanishes. In the absence of organs, nervous system and brain, there is no basis for mind, no outward form and attributes of a human being; hence when man is incriminated or cremated he exists no more. To say he survives the destruction of the body is equivalent to affirming that man can exist made of nothing.

To affirm that this is "horrid doctrine" is only to exhibit ignorance. Nothing can be horrid to the dead. The present condition of future generations cannot be horrid—the condition of the dead is identical. Eternal life, however, possibly implies—even in the absence of a literal hell—horrors beyond conception.

OTTO WETTSTEIN
La Grange, Ills.

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